

RC 1057

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STUDY OF AFGHAN REFUGEE SECONDARY/HIGHER EDUCATION ISSUES. AFTER HAVING CONSULTED WITH APPROPRIATE GOP AUTHORITIES - PROVINCIAL COMMISSIONER FOR AFGHAN REFUGEES, RUSTAM SHAH, AND HIS EDUCATION CELL CHIEF - IRC HAS BEEN GIVEN THE GO-AHEAD TO ASSESS ALL AFGHAN REFUGEE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS BEYOND THE PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL. NWFP COMMISSIONER FOR AFGHAN REFUGEES RUSTAM SHAH MOHMAND REPORTEDLY SAID HE WOULD CONSIDER IRC'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES RELATING TO MIDDLE AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND WOULD EVEN ENTERTAIN SUGGESTIONS RELATING TO A FREE AFGHAN UNIVERSITY.

3. IRC HAS EMPLOYED AN AFGHAN EDUCATOR WITH IMPRESSIVE CREDENTIALS TO OVERSEE ITS SURVEY. ABDUL GHAFUR (M.A., UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT - 1973) HAD ONCE SERVED AS CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONER IN THE GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN AND WAS THE PRIME MINISTER'S SPECIAL ADVISOR ON EDUCATION IN PRE-1978 REGIMES. HE RECENTLY ARRIVED IN PAKISTAN AFTER SPENDING TWO YEARS AS A POLITICAL PRISONER IN KABUL. MR. GHAFUR ESTIMATES IT WILL TAKE SIX MONTHS TO DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE PAPER ON AFGHAN REFUGEE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS BEYOND THE PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL. COMMENT: HAVING CONVERSED WITH GHAFUR AT LENGTH, WE BELIEVE HE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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IS AN EXCELLENT CHOICE AS SURVEY COORDINATOR. END COMMENT.

4. ON-GOING EDUCATION FOR AFGHAN REFUGEES BEYOND THE PRIMARY LEVEL IS PRESENTLY BEING UNDERTAKEN ON A SIGNIFICANT SCALE BY INTERAID, A CHRISTIAN ECUMENICAL VOLAG OPERATING THROUGHOUT PAKISTAN. INTER-AID HAS TAKEN UPON ITSELF THE TASK OF EDUCATING APPROXIMATELY 5,000 AFGHAN MIDDLE AND SECONDARY STUDENTS. VOLAG CLAIMS ITS SCHOOLS HAVE THE BACKING OF BOTH FUNDAMENTALIST AND MODERATE AFGHAN POLITICAL PARTIES. INTERAID'S PESHAWAR REPRESENTATIVE SAYS THAT HE HAS BEEN APPROACHED BY A COALITION OF POLITICAL PARTIES WITH A REQUEST THAT AN "OPEN UNIVERSITY" FOR AFGHANS BE ESTABLISHED. INTERAID WOULD LIKE TO EXPAND ITS POST-PRIMARY EDUCATIONAL FUNCTION BUT WOULD NEED UNHCR AND, POSSIBLY, OTHER DONOR SUPPORT TO DO SO.

5. COMMENT: IRC AND INTERAID INITIATIVES FILL AN IMPORTANT NEED. WE HAVE LITTLE DOUBT THAT EMBASSY WILL BE APPROACHED EITHER DIRECTLY OR THROUGH THE UNHCR FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ONCE NEEDS ARE ESTABLISHED AND EDUCATIONAL SCHEMES TAKE FORM. END COMMENT. AS STATED PREVIOUSLY, WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT IT IS INADVISABLE FOR THE

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USG TO BE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
FOR AFGHAN REFUGEES. HINTON

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